

REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed May 6, 2004. In order to advance prosecution of this case, Applicants amend Claims 9 and 33. Applicants cancel Claims 1, 3-5, 7, 8, 22-32, 36 and 37 without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Examiner Interview Summary

On Monday, May 24, 2004, Luke K. Pedersen (attorney for Applicants) and the Examiner participated in a telephonic Examiner Interview. The substance of the interview is addressed below.

Applicants pointed out to the Examiner that the Office Action relied upon U.S. Patent No. 6,461,076 issued to Stephens et al ("Stephens") in the rejection of many claims, even though the Examiner had previously indicated that a previously filed affidavit ("Affidavit") was sufficient to overcome the *Stephens* reference. *See Office Action mailed August 28, 2003, Page 7.*

The Examiner confirmed that *Stephens* was considered regarding the patentability of all pending claims and, as indicated on page 12 of the Office Action, the Examiner determined that Claims 9, 15, 21 and 33 are each patentably distinguishable from *Stephens*. Further, the Examiner confirmed that the Affidavit was not relied upon for any purpose in the Office Action mailed May 6, 2004.

Applicants requested that the Affidavit be withdrawn from consideration in the present application, and any related applications.

Withdrawal of Previously Filed Affidavit

In furtherance of the request made during the Examiner Interview, Applicants hereby withdraw the Affidavit of Dean C. Alberson Under 37 C.F.R. §1.131 (“Affidavit”) from consideration in this application, or any related application. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner not rely upon the Affidavit for any purpose in the prosecution of this application or any related applications.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation the indication by the Examiner that Claims 15-21 are allowed and Claims 9-12, 14 and 33-35 are directed to allowable subject matter and would be allowable if re-written in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. For the reasons discussed below, Applicant respectfully contends that Claims 9-12, 14 and 33-35 are now in condition for allowance.

Claims 9 and 33 are rewritten in independent form, and now include all of the limitations of their prior base claims and any intervening claims. Thus, since the Examiner previously indicated that Claims 9 and 33 were directed to allowable subject matter, Applicants respectfully contend that Claims 9 and 33 are in condition for allowance.

Claims 10-12, 14, and 34-35 each depend, either directly or indirectly, from Claim 9 or Claim 33. Thus, for the reasons discussed above with regard to their base claims, Applicants respectfully contend that Claims 10-12, 14 and 34-35 are each in condition for allowance.

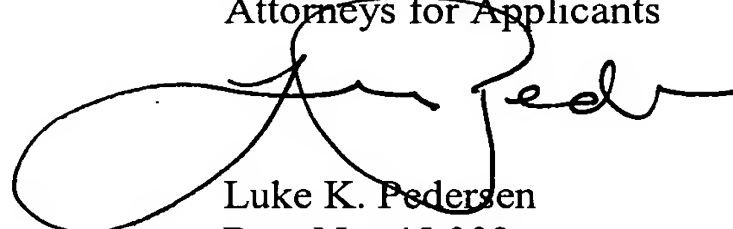
Conclusions

Applicants have made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For the foregoing reasons, and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicants respectfully request full allowance of all pending Claims. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference or an interview would advance prosecution of this Application in any manner, the undersigned attorney for Applicants stands ready to conduct such a conference at the convenience of the Examiner.

Applicants believe no fee is due, however; should there be a fee discrepancy, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 02-0384 of Baker Botts L.L.P.

Respectfully submitted,

BAKER BOTTS L.L.P.
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Date: 6/4/04

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